LEX LUTHOR
MAN OF STEEL
NO. 3
OF 5
JULY '05
BRIAN AZZARELLO
LEE BERMEJO
dccomics.com

I MUST SAY, I DID ENJOY OUR AFTERNOON TOGETHER, MR. LUTHOR.
AS DID I, ALFRED. YOU'VE BEEN A VERY GRACIOUS TOUR GUIDE.
YES, WELL, I APOLOGIZE FOR MASTER BRUCE'S--
--THANK YOU, BUT DON'T. HE IS WHO HE IS...
...AND HE'S LUCKY TO HAVE YOU.
HOW LONG'S YOUR CONTRACT, ANYWAY?
I'M FLATTERED, MR. LUTHOR, BUT--
--YOU'RE MORE LOYAL THAN FLATTERED. I RESPECT THAT.
AND ALFRED? RESPECT IS SOMETHING THAT'S EARNED...

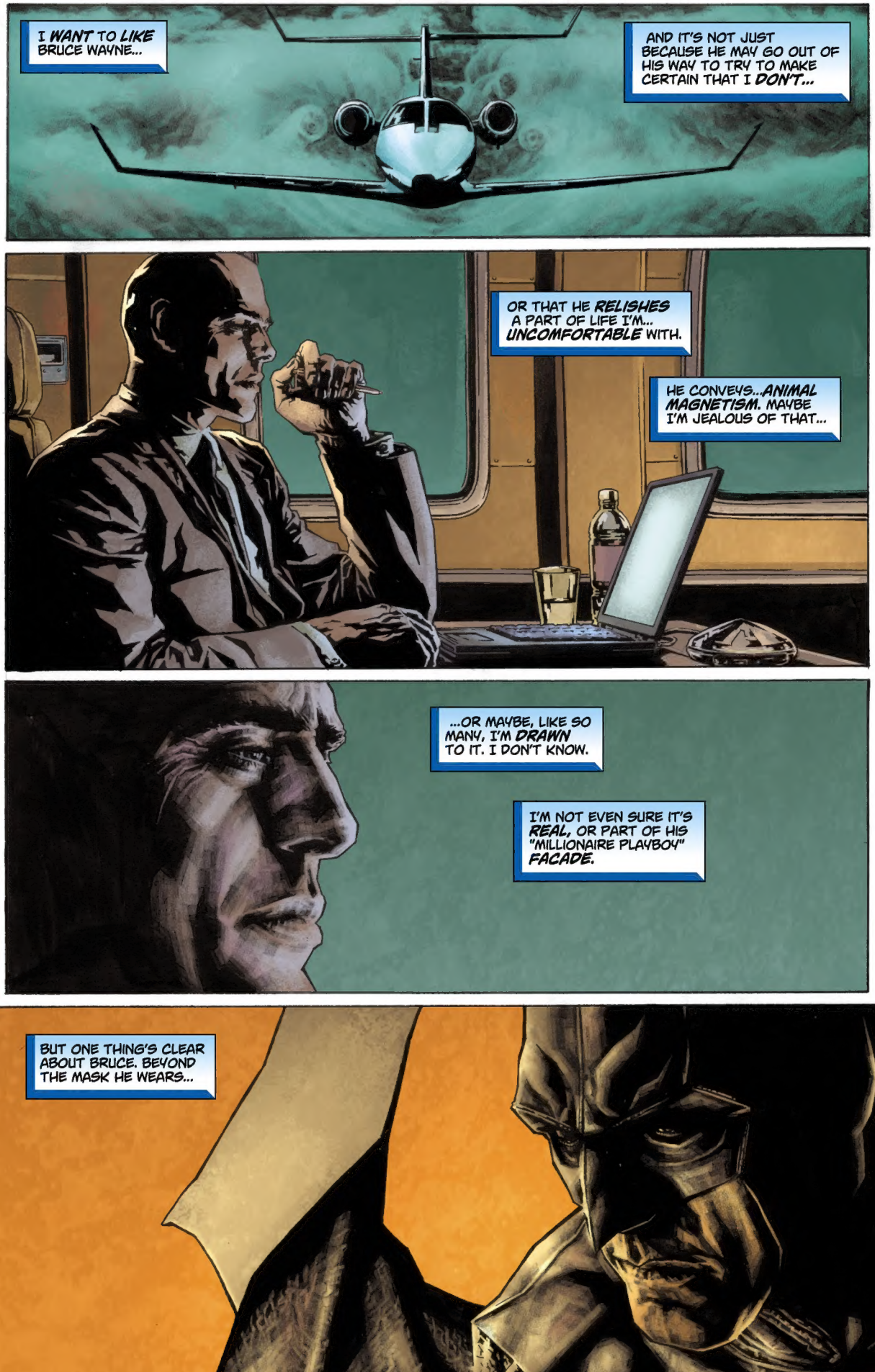
"...NOT INHERITED."
MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, WHEN CHOOSING A PATH, IT'S THE EASY ROAD THAT'S TAKEN.
THE REASONS ARE OBVIOUS. UNDERSTANDABLE...
...BUT ULTIMATELY, UNDEFENDABLE.
BECAUSE WE WERE CREATED TO CREATE OURSELVES...
IT'S THE GREATEST GIFT OUR CREATOR GAVE TO US.
THE PROBLEM THOUGH, IS THAT FOR MANY, A GIFT FALLS SHORT OF WHAT THEY BELIEVE THEY DESERVE.

BORN TO GREATNESS IS A LIE.
AND FATE WAS INVENTED BY COWARDS. BUT DESTINY...
...IS SOMETHING WE HOLD IN OUR HANDS.

Gotham Gazette
★★★ TUESDAY, JULY 12, 2004
35¢ ★★★
BATMAN NABS KIDNAPPERS!
LEX! HOW ARE YOU THIS MORNING?
I'M FINE, BRUCE. AND IT'S NEARLY ONE.
AM I LATE? I TOLD ALFRED--
YOU'RE A FEW MINUTES EARLY.
THAT'S ALFRED FOR YOU! HE--BY THE WAY-- IS AT YOUR DISPOSAL FOR THE REST OF THE DAY. I'M SORRY I HAD TO CUT DINNER SHORT LAST NIGHT. I TRUST MORIMOTO TREATED YOU--
--IT WAS ONE OF THE BEST MEALS I'VE EVER HAD.
LOOKS LIKE YOUR DESSERT GOT THE BEST OF YOU, THOUGH...
WELL, DESSERT'S SOMETIMES BEST SERVED A LITTLE ROUGH, N'EST-CE PAS?
HELLO, MR. WAYNE.

GREGORY! WHAT'S COOKING?
THIS IS LEX LUTHOR. LEX, GREGORY IS ONE OF THE TOP CHEFS IN GOTHAM...
MY PLEASURE, MR. LUTHOR.
IF I MAY RECOMMEND, TODAY I'VE PREPARED--
DO YOU MIND, LEX?
MENU
IT'S YOUR TOWN.
IT IS, ISN'T IT?
GREG, BRING US A COUPLE STRIPS, ABOUT A POUND AND A QUARTER EACH. MEDIUM RARE--ON THE RARE SIDE. A WET, RIPE, BEEFSTEAK TOMATO SALAD, WITH VERY THINLY SLICED RED ONION. DRESS IT WITH EXTRA VIRGIN--
--LIKE THERE IS SUCH A THING!--
--AND MALDON SALT.

WOULD YOU LIKE A POTATO, LEX, OR HAVE YOU...
...NO, I'VE BOUGHT INTO THAT.
GOOD FOR YOU.
ON THE SIDE... A BIT OF MAYTAG BLUE CHEESE, AND...
WE'RE DRINKING RED, RIGHT?
SPARKLING WATER.
YOU HEARD THE MAN.
THANK YOU, MR. WAYNE.
GREGORY-- BRING ME JUST A GLASS OF CABERNET. '91 MONTE BELLO CAB.
NO WINE, LEX?
I'VE GOT SOME THINGS TO TALK ABOUT, BRUCE.
EXACTLY. AND THAT'S SO MUCH EASIER TO DO WHEN WINE'S INVITED TO THE TABLE.
GREGORY-- THE BOTTLE--AND TWO GLASSES!


I WANT TO LIKE BRUCE WAYNE...
AND IT'S NOT JUST BECAUSE HE MAY GO OUT OF HIS WAY TO TRY TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT I DON'T...
OR THAT HE RELISHES A PART OF LIFE I'M... UNCOMFORTABLE WITH.
HE CONVEYS...ANIMAL MAGNETISM. MAYBE I'M JEALOUS OF THAT...
...OR MAYBE, LIKE SO MANY, I'M DRAWN TO IT. I DON'T KNOW.
I'M NOT EVEN SURE IT'S REAL, OR PART OF HIS "MILLIONAIRE PLAYBOY" FACADE.
BUT ONE THING'S CLEAR ABOUT BRUCE. BEYOND THE MASK HE WEARS...

...IS HIS PASSION.
A PALPABLE THING, THAT'S ALMOST GREATER THAN THE MAN HIMSELF.
AND IF THERE'S PASSION...
THERE'S DESIRE.

AND DESIRE MEANS THERE'S A HOLE IN THE MAN.
I WONDER, NOT JUST WHAT THAT HOLE IS...
...BUT HOW DEEP IT IS.

AND IF I HAVE THE MEANS TO FILL IT.
SO LEX, WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?
WE HAVE A PROJECT AT LEXCORP THAT, FRANKLY...
...WE NEED WAYNE INDUSTRIES' HELP WITH.
JOINT VENTURE?
NO. PROPRIETARY TECHNOLOGY. NOTHING COMMERCIAL.
THAT SOUNDS LIKE A NO GO, LEX. BUT GO ON.
I HEARD THOMAS LABS HAS MADE A FAIRLY SHATTERING BREAKTHROUGH ON THE ALZHEIMER'S FRONT...
...I THINK IT COULD BE BENEFICIAL ON ANOTHER.
IT DOESN'T GROW HAIR, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE THINKING.

LET'S JUST SAY I WERE TO SAY YES. WHAT'S IT WORTH TO YOU, AND MORE IMPORTANT, WHAT'S IT FOR?
IT'S WORTH THE WORLD, BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT IT'S FOR.
COULD YOU MAKE THINGS A BIT MORE OPAQUE FOR ME?
I'M BEING VERY CLEAR HERE.
OH.
MY MISTAKE, I THOUGHT WE WERE TALKING BUSINESS...
...NOT TILTING AT WINDMILLS.
"THE DRAGON IS REAL, BRUCE. I'VE STOOD NEXT TO IT. HELL-- I'VE STOOD UP TO IT..."

"...CAN YOU SAY THE SAME?"
"I'VE...NEVER MET HIM."
"YOU DON'T MEET IT--IT MEETS YOU. HEAD ON, AND IT BUCKLES YOUR KNEES, LIKE A FORCE OF NATURE--
"--BUT IT ISN'T NATURAL."

"'IT' HAS A NAME, LEX--"
"--THAT WE GAVE HIM, AN ATTEMPT TO HUMANIZE HIM--AS POINTLESS AS NAMING A HURRICANE.
"FORGET THE NAME, BRUCE..."

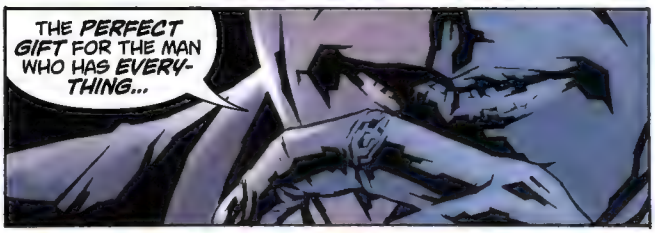
"AND THINK ABOUT WHAT HE CAN DO...
"...THINK ABOUT A HURRICANE WITH A WILL.
"THEN MULTIPLY THAT INTENSITY A THOUSAND-FOLD."

THAT'S SOME STORM.
GOOD THING HE'S ON OUR SIDE.
WHAT IF HE CHANGES HIS MIND?
WHAT IF...TONIGHT--HE LOOKS DOWN AT US AND DECIDES WE'RE NOT CAPABLE TO MANIFEST OUR OWN DESTINY?
WHAT IF TOMORROW HE WAKES UP BELIEVING HE KNOWS WHAT'S BEST FOR US?
THAT IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO PROTECT THE WORLD...
...WHEN HE CAN RULE IT?
THE ONLY SAFEGUARD WE HAVE AGAINST THAT HAPPENING...
...IS HIS WORD.

AND I SAY--HIS WORD--IS NOT ENOUGH. EVEN IF YOU BELIEVE IT, DOES IT MAKE SENSE TO ACCEPT IT?
WHAT CHOICE DO WE HAVE?
THAT'S THE WRONG QUESTION. WHAT YOU SHOULD BE ASKING...
IS WHAT CAN WE CHOOSE TO DO ABOUT IT?
WHAT'S THIS, LEX? YOU'RE NOT ABOUT TO POP--
--IT'S KRYPTONITE.

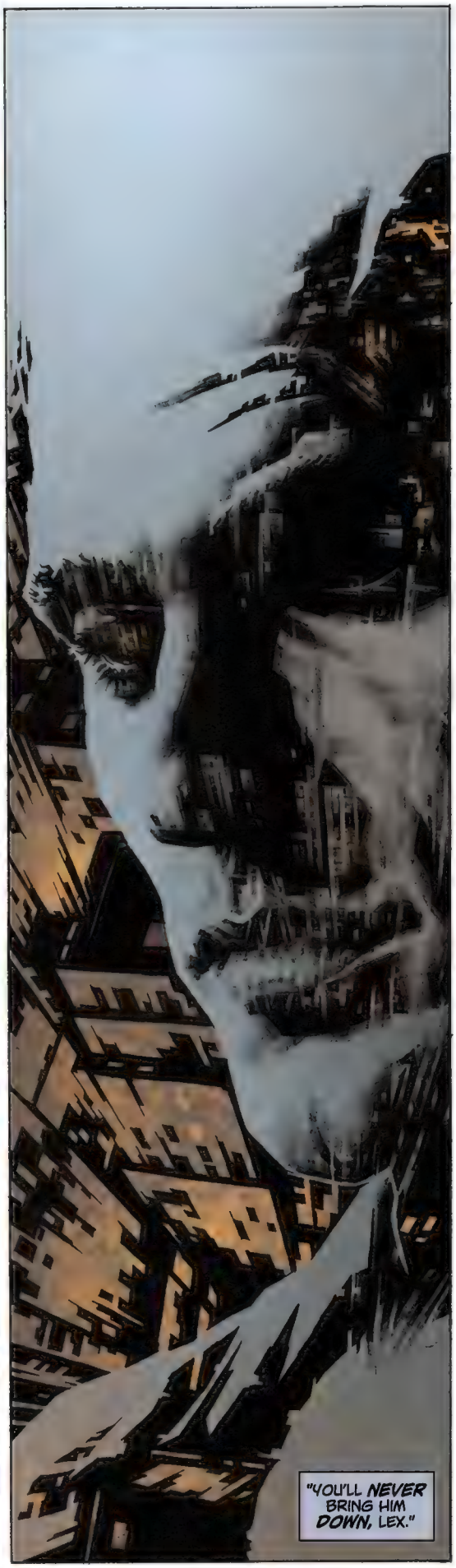
YOU'RE OFFERING ME THIS IN EXCHANGE...?

I'M GIVING IT TO YOU WITH NO STRINGS.
EVEN IF YOU DECIDE NOT TO SHARE THOMAS LABS' RESEARCH. YOU SHOULD HAVE IT...


THE PERFECT GIFT FOR THE MAN WHO HAS EVERY-THING...

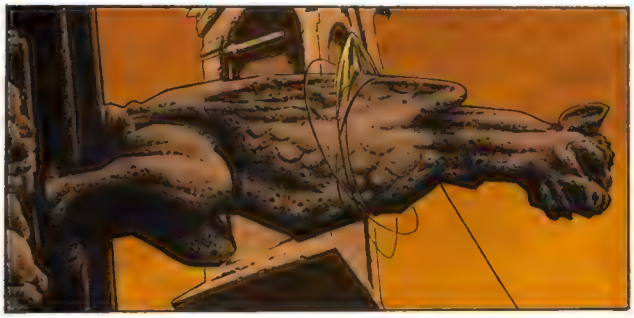
EXCEPT A CARE IN THE WORLD.
I CAN AFFORD NOT TO.

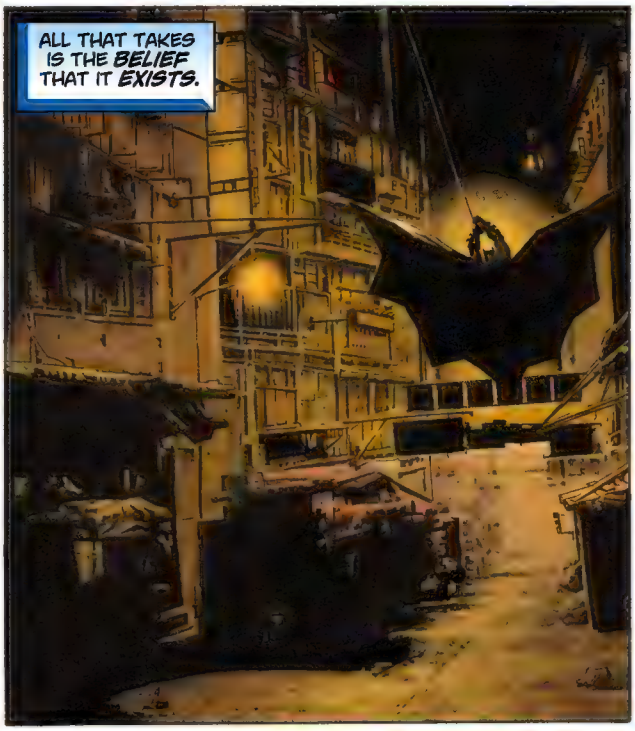
NO YOU CAN'T.
NONE OF US CAN...


"YOU'LL NEVER BRING HIM DOWN, LEX."

I'M NOT INTERESTED IN BRINGING *HIM DOWN*...
...BUT *OBSESSED* WITH BRINGING *US UP*.

ALL OF US--*EVERYONE*-- DESERVES A CHANCE AT *GREATNESS*.

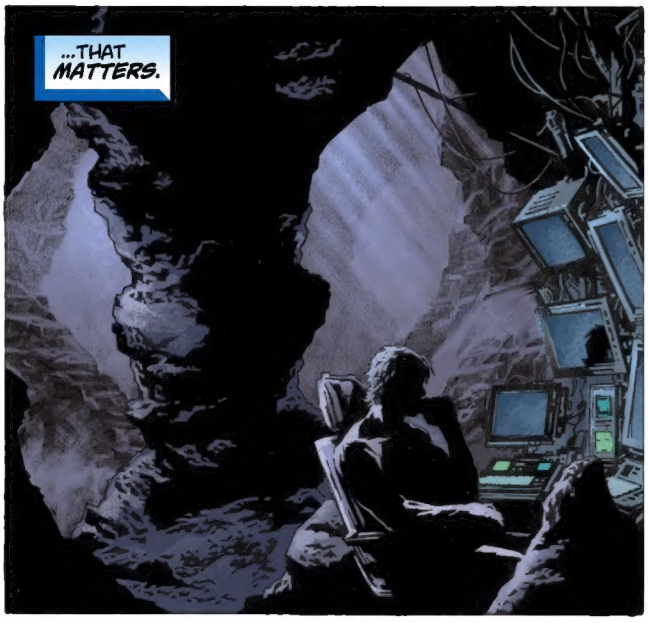



ALL THAT TAKES IS THE *BELIEF* THAT IT *EXISTS*.

BUT *HIS* EXISTENCE THREATENS NOT JUST THAT *BELIEF*...

...BUT OUR EXISTENCE.
WUNK
SHREEKK
I BELIEVE THERE'S SOMETHING INHERENTLY DANGEROUS WHEN SOMETHING REAL BECOMES MYTHIC.
CRASH
I BELIEVE WHEN THAT HAPPENS, WE LOSE THE PART OF OURSELVES THAT YEARNS TO BE GREAT.
BECAUSE WHEN FACED WITH A MYTH?
WE CAN'T WIN.

SO THE MYTHIC MUST BE EXPOSED FOR WHAT IT IS.
SO WE CAN BELIEVE IN OURSELVES.
BECAUSE IT'S ONLY WHAT'S IN US...
...THE DRIVE TO BE MYTHIC...


...THAT MATTERS.

BRRING
BRRING

HELLO.
LEX?
BRUCE WAYNE HERE...

...YOU CAN HAVE WHAT YOU WANT.
Lex Luthor: Man of Steel
SUPERMAN created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER
BRIAN AZZARELLO - WRITER
LEE BERMEJO - ARTIST
DAVE STEWART COLORIST
PHIL BALSMAN LETTERER
CASEY SELJAS ASS'T. EDITOR
WILL DENNIS EDITOR
continued